

## **Iraq**

### **Pre-Deployment Challenge      How was it addressed?**

1. Finding the time away from current position to meet training and documentation requirements prior to UDC.
  - a. Addressed by prioritizing
  - b. Contact legal office for power of attorney
2. Lack of locally documented procedures or knowledgeable people to help you through the maze of requirements.
  - a. Used the checklist from the UDC site and that helped.
3. Fulfilling medical requirements
  - a. Schedule required exam right away
4. Difficulty getting approval due to having cancer previously
  - a. Obtained memorandum on doctor's stationary stating that there had been no re-occurrence of the cancer. Had CAT scan for verification.
5. Getting orders prepared, last minute changes, what organization will pay
  - a. Communicate with JMC/AMC
6. Completing pre-UDC paperwork twice
7. Coordinating overlap dates with incumbent QASAS on site
  - a. Send emails to QASAS on site
8. Logistics for arriving in country
  - a. Continuously working through obstacles
9. Having to drive 2 hours one way to get shots, multiple times. Local clinics need to carry the shots we need for deployment.
10. Working through the POCs to get a slot in TSIRTs (USAEUR version of UDC). Persistence is the key.
11. Recommend not using CRC. It's not tough but so much time is wasted standing around.
12. UDC medical staff can overrule/disagree with medical opinions of a deployee's personal physician. Received authorization from DA, S3 to waive the requirements to attend UDC.
13. Concerned when the govt credit card and orders were delayed

### **Deployment Challenge      How was it addressed?**

1. Dealing with financial problems caused by DFAS and DAC
2. Proper pass down of procedures in place at deployment location
3. Adjusting to the heat
  - a. Stay hydrated
4. Living conditions

5. Family problems
  - a. Stay in contact via email
6. Need to be physically fit and careful to protect back
  - a. Be careful about lifting – 25 lbs of body armor and 35 lbs of gear
7. Military Air – treated as cargo
  - a. Try not to travel
8. Waiting at the Kuwait airport for a flight to Iraq
  - a. Learned I could have reserved a flight instead of waiting for next available open seat
9. Knowing exactly where to go on arrival – no one at UDC provided an itinerary of what to expect.
  - a. QASAS who deployed 2 weeks prior provided a detailed list of where to go and what to do
10. Getting personnel to travel within the AOR to perform inspections at remote locations
  - a. If not willing to travel they could be replace and returned to CONUS
11. Teaching units how to safely store ammo
  - a. Train units with regulations and demonstration. Spot checks
12. Getting information and maps
  - a. Addressed by working and communicating with units.
13. Developing facilities, getting equipment and supplies to perform mission
  - a. Scoured bases from landfill to supply areas, develop barter system with people who have things needed
14. Resistance to the presence of a full time QASAS at the ATHP. Hostility directed at QASAS from soldiers running the ASP
  - a. Slowly integrated with their processes, getting them use to a civilian in their environment
15. Traveling to different FOB conducting Ammunition Basic Load inspections during Tech Assist Visits. There were no experienced or knowledgeable ammo personnel to assist you.
  - a. You have to supervise soldiers, perform inspections, and make sure everything was in compliance with safe to ship procedures.
16. There was a general lack of guidance regarding deployment. There are no countrywide procedures in place.
  - a. Was recently remedied by JMC-SSTR
  - b. In the future it would be worthwhile to create a “deployment strike force” to visit various storage sites and create a broad based SOP. This way the whole country would be on the same page.
  - c. A welcome packet would be nice, something coming from the SCR that includes relevant guidance; SWA packaging requirements, packaging request forms, theater roster and the DNR list.

17. Each deployment may be very different from the previous so one needs to be prepared for continuous change.
18. The toughest challenge was the inexperienced personnel. Had to provide extensive OTJ training.
19. I was not left any legacy information or an SOP and missed an overlap with person I replaced. I did not have locations of the units within my AOR.
  - a. I communicated with help desk at JBB and was able to retrieve some legacy through them.
  - b. I sought out locations from others in the area and made a map with unit locations plotted.
20. Being assigned to a COB with two large ATHPs, prioritizing was the key.
21. People do not realize that most of us have never done this position before and it is a big learning curve.
22. Even though we are drawing down in Iraq, some Commanders did not want to give up their QASAS or LAR even though the ammo mission is greatly reduced.
  - a. We had to come to an agreement and move on.

### **Will experience change the way current job is performed?**

1. Need to simplify regulations for war and contingency environments
2. Closer attention to detail when explaining tasks and technical requirements for specific missions. Ensure personnel understand their mission.
3. Gained experience in the explosive safety field.
4. Use the Munitions History Program (MHP) more
5. Better knowledge of how stateside aspects and deployment aspects differ
6. Better understanding of what Commanders have to deal with
7. I have a greater knowledge of what goes on away from the depot and what the warfighters expect.
8. I would support my coworkers and the incoming QASAS to a greater extent. The only friend a QASAS has is other QASAS.
9. It made me more confident and a better leader/supervisor.
10. I have learned more about the working structure of the AFSB, interfacing with units at all levels, learning the most effective way to get the message across.
11. Depot and ASP operations very different. Most deployments mirror ASP operations.

### **Best preparation for Logistics/ES in Theater**

1. Previous deployment
2. Prior military experience
3. Talking with QASAS I replaced and to others that have deployed before
4. Reasonable physical fitness

5. Working with the troops on issues and returns and working the shipping desk
6. QASAS experience such as AR 5-9 visits, workshop experience, K-line, previous submissions of explosive safety site plans.
7. The first meeting with the Senior QASAS in Iraq prior to taking up duties to understand his thoughts, procedures and priorities.
8. Experience working in USATCES
9. A general understanding that nothing will happen unless you make it happen
10. My private sector experience in the transportation industry
11. Online training and being part of the Brigade Logistics Support Team, learned by observing their methods.
12. Twenty years of experience as a QASAS.
13. Being exposed to the LAP course at FT Lee helped me to understand the shops within the AFSB.
14. Having taught HazMat gave me an advantage when it came to shipments

## **Advice for Explosive Safety Specialist who are deploying**

1. Experience with explosive safety assistance visit
2. Knowledge of explosives safety test program
3. Ability to use AutoCAD
4. Drawing a good map
5. Listen and look at a problem from the requestor's point of view.
6. Review BLAHA quantity distance rules and their application

## **Advice**

1. Contact in-theater POC as soon as you know who it is. Maintain contact with the person you are replacing.
2. Start deployment requirements right away. Use Deployment Center Website to help navigate through the requirements.
3. Submit all required memos for pay ceiling caps
4. Travel light. It can be difficult to transport more than 1 large bag and 1 small bag with you while traveling in country. Obtain an address of where you are to be assigned and mail items ahead or have them sent once you arrive. Basic items can be purchased at PX.
5. Get all online references, locations, passwords, and email addresses up to date. Bring digital camera
6. Read OIF Surveillance report sent to all QASAS being deployed to Iraq/Afghanistan
7. Forward data to AKO email address prior to deployment. Download information to external hard drive. Take personal computer.
8. Make sure to have an in-country phone number to facilitate travel and help to understand the difficulties and needs of deployed QASAS.

9. Use Composite Risk Management
10. Be able to explain why you are there
11. Offer solutions, not problems
12. Let leaders help
13. Don't be discouraged, use patience and understanding. Pick your battles, assist and guide. Be prepared – do not shoot from the hip. Speak up if something is wrong.
14. Work with ammo soldiers and closely monitor DODICS with high expenditure rates. Be familiar with DODICS vs. NSN
15. Read manuals in respect to duty assignment. Become familiar with storage, handling and minimum packaging requirements. Keep current on new ammo items, NARS and AINs.
16. With upcoming drawdown it is going to become hectic. Expect the unexpected such as taped grenades.
17. Be familiar with retrograde requirements. Be familiar with investigating and handling malfunctions. Know how to do an ACR.
18. Remember your training and stay as close to the book as you can. Mistakes are going to happen, fix your process then move on.
19. Be prepared for things that your predecessors did not experience
20. If assigned to a BLST team, try to enroll and take class at Rock Island on how a BLST works.
21. Be prepared to handle inspections a little different than you do at a Depot or Post Camp Station.
22. Do DSR comments, and if you do an ACR do an admin comment in the Munitions History Program (MHP)
23. Get experience in as many manager job areas as possible.
24. Make sure everything with your name on is 100 percent correct. Do not make other people word check it.
25. All deploying QASAS should have ASP experience or deploy with QASAS who has

## **Greatest achievement**

## **What led to that success?**

1. Upgrading the field return/inspection area to a functional area. Build overhead shelters for protection from sun/weather conditions.
2. Preparing and segregating ammo for redeployment to home station.
3. Traveling to other locations to provide assistance to units
4. Creating trust and communication channels with current ordnance company. Work together to provide soldiers with good ammunition
5. Inspected, classified, and returned ammunition found on post.
6. Completing shipments to Afghanistan with no discrepancies. Completed 100% inspection prior to shipment
7. Completing whole unit ammunition inspections. Issuing ABL's to newly deployed units within established time frame.

8. Getting all Explosive Site Surveys completed
9. Reducing the explosive foot print at the ATHP and coordination and cooperation with its servicing unit to successfully and safely manage the class V assets at FOB.
10. Establishing an amnesty program. Assisting with downsizing of FOB, it went from an ATHP to an AHA. Getting units to turn in all excess ammo
11. Provided technical assistance and advice by maintaining a trusting relationship
12. Presenting MG with the explosives safety issues in Iraq and seeing that emphasized by the Multinational Divisions Safety.
13. Develop quantity distance templates for EOD compounds
14. Development of an example of a Certificate of Risk Acceptance (CORA) to be used for guidance in completing the CORA form.
15. Getting air conditioning fixed – trailer lacked O&M support
16. The closure of ASP Scorpion and Q-West while collecting and shipping legacy ammunition that was hidden in every corner of the base
17. Did not miss an RDD date on any shipment sent from my CSA/ASP during my deployment. Teamwork lead to this success, civilian and Army working together.
18. Shipped serviceable ammunition from four different FOBs due to the drawdown.
19. Correcting incorrect NSNs and Condition Codes.
20. Designing a prototype tool to provide EMR shielding for 2.75 inch rockets during up and down loading in a FARP environment.
21. Made improvements in the safe transporting of ammunition in Iraq.
22. Getting over 1400 lines of ammunition inspected packaged and shipped with no discrepancy.
23. Convincing the accountable officer that though “Z” storage was authorized it would lower his risks if he isolated the initiators. He agreed and moved all initiators to an unused pad.
24. Reworking ammunition was destined for demil.

## **Information to Share**

1. If deploying after 1 November, bring gortex and wet weather gear
2. Use QASAS support channel to ask questions and to compare how the same issues are handled at other FOBs
3. Be flexible, ready, and willing to respond to unique situations.
4. Consider OCONUS assignments prior to deploying
5. Bring a camera for documentation
6. Tools, equipment, and supplies are at a premium, learn to adapt and improvise. Interactions with the troops are good and bad.
7. Do the best job you can with the materials you have, will need to improvise packaging and transportation.

8. Have an open mind when deployed, things change from day-to-day. It is best to come in knowing that things here are not the same as stateside.
9. Teamwork – find at least three people who will be good advisers for you as the need arises in your career
10. Keep a positive attitude; it makes the days go smoother. If you are deployed with other QASAS take care of each other. Be vigilant.
11. Some tasks are more difficult than others, do not become complacent, safety is always first. Know your information
12. Deployments are a great learning opportunity.
13. Help provide solutions and options to improve and reduce risks.
14. Be prepared to move around on the installation or to move to another installation.
15. Be prepared to walk.
16. Seek guidance for those who came before you.
17. It was a fun experience
18. Be patient, there is a tremendous amount of ammunition ignorance and it usually is not the soldier's fault.
19. Get to know your chain of command and keep them informed.
20. Work as a team and share what you bring to the fight with your coworkers.
21. There is never a dumb questions when it comes to legacy/found ammunition and explosives
22. You may be working with an Ordnance Unit that has little experience working at an ASP.
23. Know your references.
24. Check previous write-ups

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. QASAS should be trained in ASP procedures before deploying
  - a. A website should be established at the DAU/DAC for QASAS to complete prior to deploying
2. All personnel should have training in issues, turn-ins, rewarehousing, CC tags, markings, packaging, shipping

